under Section 24 of the Mines Act, 1952 to ascertain the causes and circumstances attending the accident. Based on the findings and recommendations of the Court of Inquiry necessary action, where necessary, is initiated.

After the fire disaster in January 1994 in New Kenda colliery of Eastern Coalfields Limited, the Government got the safety status of all the mines of Coal India Limited examined through a special safety audit. Coal companies took corrective action to rectify the deficiencies revealed by the safety audit. Corrective action on an on-going basis is being taken based on the safety audit reports.

After the inundation accident at Gaslitand and other mines of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd, (BCCL) in September, 1995, some of the mines of BCCL were declared seasonal by DGMS.

(c) Follow-up steps are being taken to improve the safety status in coal mines:—

(1) The internal safety organisation has been strengthened by providing additional powers for enforcement of safety practices.

(2) System of periodic safety audit has been introduced.

(3) Close monitoring of safety status of highly gassy mines and fiery mines is being done.

(4) Timber support is being phased out with steel support.

(5) Telecommunication from underground mines to the surface is being introduced in a phased manner.

(6) A large number of high head high capacity pumps have been produced for emergency dewatering.

(7) Automatic methane and fire alarms have been provided in degree III gassy mines and fiery mines.

(8) Orders have been placed for highly capital intensive safety Equipment like large diameter rescue drill and operation and maintenance personnel have been selected.

(9) Additional rescue rooms have been planned so that rescue teams are able to reach any mine within 30 minutes of receiving any information of emergency.

Special assistance to mentally impaired persons

937. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any schemes have been or are being launched for special assistance to those mentally impaired persons who, according to the doctors attending on them, can be helped with social, financial and other support to stand on their own feet and lead a life with dignity;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the Government's policy in regard to support maintenance and rehabilitation of the mentally retarded and impaired persons; and

(d) the estimated number of such persons?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (c) Apart from the National Institute for Mentally Handicapped Secunderabad, set up primarily to train professionals to provide services of rehabilitation & special education for the Mentally Handicapped, benefits from the following Schemes for the Welfare of the Disabled being adminstered by Ministry of Welfare through Non-Governmental Organisations also go to mentally retarded persons:—

(1) Assistance to Organisations for the Disabled;

(2) Assistance to Organisations for Esablishment and Development of Special Schools for Handicapped Children; and

(3) Assistance to Organisations for Persons with cerebral Palsy and Mental Retardation for Manpower Development. Ministry of Human Resource Development also administers a Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children including Mentally Handicapped.

A National Trust is proposed to be set up for providing total care to persons suffering from mental retardation and cerebral palsy and also to manage the properties bequeathed to the mentally retarded person.

(d) No comprehensive Survey has been conducted for assessing the number of mentally handicapped persons in the country. However, a Sample Survey conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 1991, regarding children between 1 & 14 years of age, estimates that about 3% of the estimated child population has delayed mental development. Estimates made by some other Organisations suggest that 2-2.5% of the estimated population suffers from mental retardation.

Dispute between CIL and Gujarat Electricity Board over supply of Coal

938. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Coal India Ltd. is not willing to reintroduce the earlier practice of joint sampling of coal at power station end;

(b) whether there is any dispute between the CIL and Gujarat Electricity Board regarding receipt of coal;

(c) if so, the details of amount involved in such disputes vis-a-vis the details of amount disputed by the GEB; and

(d) whether there is any increase in the amount involved in such disputes after the joint sampling at power station end by the CIL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) In keeping with World-wide commercial practice, the loading end is the logical one for ascertaining the quality and quantity of coal despatches to consumers. This is also in accordance with the Sale of Goods Act, 1930.

(b) and (c) There have been claims from Gujarat Electricity Board (GEB) regarding coal supplies from the subsidiaries of Coal India Limited. These claims have since been settled through mutual discussion between GEB and the coal companies.

(d) In view of the settlement arrived at, there has not been further claim or dispute on this account.

Purchase of Coal by SAIL

939. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the undertakings from whom Steel Authority of India Limited has been presently purchasing the coal every year alongwith the details of rate per tonne;

(b) whether it is a fact that SAIL has not been getting good quality coal and as a result, the quality of the by-products is also getting affected;

(c) whether SAIL has informed the concerned department in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to see that good quality coal is supplied to the SAIL?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (d) SAIL is purchasing coking coal and boiler coal from Coal India Limited and its subsidiaries. In addition low ash coking coal is also being imported.

SAIL has not been getting desired quality of indigenous coking coal. This has affected plant operations including the bye-products. The quantity of coking coal purchased during 1995-96 and 1996-97 (Apr.-Oct'96) is as follows:—

1995-96	9.00 million tonnes
April-October'96	4.73 million tonnes

The rates per tonne during the above period are as follows:—

Rs. per tonne

	1995-96	w.e.f. 1/4/96	w.e.f. 20/10/96
BCCL	1467.51*	1685	1888
CCL	1342.84	1500	1664
WCL	1320.00	1505	1677

*Weighted average.

Efforts are made to off-set the high ash of indigenous coking coal by using low ash superior quality imported coking coal. The coal companies are regularly apprised about the poor quality of indigenous coal. There is also constant interaction between SAIL and CIL on issues related to quality.